



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 457 ~ September 29, 2014 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Fall 2014

Harvest list is online

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Many more recipes on our website

BULK ROMA TOMATOES

Until approximately the middle of October we are taking orders for Crooked Sky Farms' Roma tomatoes in bulk.

Roma tomatoes are great for sauces, salsas, purées, canning, drying, freezing, etc.

Orders are pre-paid, at the front desk: \$25 for 15 pounds.



MORE HEAVY RAINS IN PHOENIX

Farmer Frank reported to us today that he suffered more heavy rains at his Phoenix field over the weekend.

As before, this means that most or all of our produce will continue to come from his fields in Duncan (another example of the dependability we gain as a result of Farmer Frank's geographic diversification).

Apparently the Phoenix field does have some items, such as eggplant, which could be harvested except for the mud. So this also means that we may see less variety in our harvest lists for a short while.

Sorry, but we just can't seem to control the weather! Any member who figures how to control the weather gets a free CSA subscription!

THE TUCSON CSA: NOT YOUR TYPICAL FOR-PROFIT BUSINESS

As many of you know, the goal of the Tucson CSA is not to make money. The CSA's mission is to provide local organic products to its members while supporting small local producers by allowing them to realize better prices for their products than the wholesale prices traditional retail stores would pay. To do this, the CSA keeps its costs and its margin as low as possible.

On average, the CSA pays 90% of its sales directly to its suppliers and keeps only 10% to cover costs. How does this translate to a per member figure? For the \$20 per week a member pays for a produce share, \$2 goes to the CSA. Half of that \$2 goes to bank fees and Farmigo fees (Farmigo is our membership management system). Only the remaining \$1 of the \$20 member payment actually lands in the CSA's bank account. Another \$0.10 per member per week on average is contributed to the CSA's income by the sales of other shares (bread, cheese, sprouts) and non-share products (eggs, meats, etc.) From that average \$1.10 per member per week, the CSA must pay expenses such as rent, wages, insurance and other miscellaneous expenses such repairs, equipment, printing, cooking demo expenses, etc.

Farmer Frank gives the CSA one free produce share for every twenty sold shares. We use these free shares to compensate CSA volunteers and musicians. Only two members of our staff, Philippe and Sara, receive any cash compensation for their time, and Farmer Frank contributes part of this cost.

Our very small margin explains why we cannot reimburse members, or give them credit, for missed pickups. Since we're only making about \$1 per week per share, reimbursing a member \$20 for a missed pickup means that it would take us about 20 weeks to make up that loss.

RED LA SODA POTATOES

One of the potato varieties we get from Farmer Frank, the Red La Soda, is considered commercially unviable, even though both it and the Dark Red Norland are the dominant, high-yielding varieties of red-skinned potatoes in the West. La Soda's deep eyes, for example, make the potato difficult to peel, and it loses its bright red color in storage (hence its reference as a "fresh-market" potato). Because the Red La Soda is resistant to tipburn (browning of the edges or tips of leaves), however, as well as to wind, heat, and drought damage, it is well-suited to our climate. Red La Sodas, however, don't need to be peeled at all. In fact, much flavor resides in the potato skins themselves, and since Farmer Frank doesn't use chemicals, you needn't be concerned about pesticides and other bad stuff concentrating in the skin. (If you feel compelled to peel them anyway, don't throw the skins away—use them to add flavor to a soup stock.)

Due to its low starch content, the Red La Soda has a creamy texture and is good for boiling, because it holds its shape when cooked. Its firm, waxy texture is perfect for gratins and potato salads. (By contrast, the buttery Yukon Golds we receive from Farmer Frank are good bakers and fryers due to their higher starch content.)

Potatoes have fewer calories and more nutrients than rice, pasta, or bread. Contrary to rumor, the potato is not fattening in the least; butter and cream are! A naked medium-sized potato has less than 100 calories, and boiling reduces the calories to a scant 80. The reason they are low in calories is that potatoes are 75 to 80 percent water. High in vitamin B (including niacin, thiamine, riboflavin, and pyridoxine), the potato is really good for you—as well as being good to eat.

Roasted Red Pepper Dip-new

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is a delicious chunky dip that can vary according to your taste. The big bell peppers we have been getting in our shares are extra meaty and perfect for this dish.

2 large red, yellow or orange peppers
1 or 2 roasted chiles, red if possible, optional
1 cup walnuts or almonds
1/2 cup bread crumbs
1/4 cup olive oil
1 clove garlic
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon honey
1 teaspoon smoked paprika, optional
1 teaspoon ground cumin, optional
Salt to taste

Roast peppers over the flame of your stove top, laying on top of burners and rotating frequently, until charred all over. Or char on the high flame of a grill, or under the broiler in the oven. Put roasted peppers in a paper bag and let sit for at least 10 minutes. Heat one tablespoon of oil in a skillet over medium high heat and add bread crumbs. Cook, stirring frequently, until browned. Remove from heat. Add nuts to skillet, turn heat to low and toast nuts, stirring constantly about 4-5 minutes until fragrant. Set aside. Peel skins from peppers and chiles if using, remove stems and seeds. Add all ingredients to a food processor or blender and blend until well combined. Add salt to taste. Thin out with additional oil, if desired. Serve as a dip, a spread for sandwiches or a seasoning for soup.

Fresh Refrigerator Pickles

Wendy McCrady, Tucson CSA

Thanks to those of you who share your creations with us, we learn a lot and enjoy the food. The honeydew pickles we sampled last week were out of this world! Sounds odd, but a great idea, here's an easy way to use your cucumbers, peppers and even melon.

6 cups sliced vegetables (your choice)
1 cup sliced onion
2 cups white vinegar
1 1/2 cups water
1 tablespoon sugar, if desired
1 and 1/2 tablespoons salt
2 teaspoons pickling spice
1 teaspoon celery seeds
1 teaspoon mustard seed

Heat vinegar, water, sugar, salt, and spices, stirring until sugar dissolves. Boil about 10 minutes. Sterilize jars and lids with boiling water. Fill jars with vegetables and onion slices. Carefully pour in vinegar mixture. Store in refrigerator. These will keep for several months. Note: strain leftover vinegar liquid and mix with olive oil for a flavorful salad dressing.

Green Chile Pork

Lisa Anderson, Tucson CSA (adapted from "Lower Valley Carnitas" recipe in The Border Cookbook)

4 teaspoons ground cumin
4 teaspoons oregano
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
3-5 lbs. pork shoulder butt, cut into 2-inch cubes
Olive oil to sear pork and sauté onions
4 cloves garlic, minced or crushed
1 onion, chopped in large pieces
4-6 fresh green chiles, roasted or steamed, then peeled and seeded
1-2 bay leaves
1 cup chicken broth or other liquid
Optional Serving Suggestions, Tortillas, Fresh Chopped Cilantro, Chopped Cucumber, Lime Wedges

Stir together the cumin, oregano, salt, and pepper. In a large bowl, stir the spice mixture into the meat chunks. You may need to do this in two batches, and it's fine to let the meat sit for a bit at this point while you prepare the onion, garlic, and chiles. In a large pot or Dutch oven, warm the oil over medium-high heat, add the pork and sear it quickly. Again, this may need to be done in two batches. Remove meat from pan, set aside, and use pan to sauté the onions and garlic until starting to be translucent. Return the meat to the pan with a small amount (a cup or less?) of chicken broth, along with the chiles and bay leaves. Cover and cook for 2-4 hours in a 325° oven or on the stovetop, stirring every 30-40 minutes or so. Near the end of cooking, remove lid, if needed, to boil off any excess liquid. Shred the meat by pulling apart with two forks. Serve with tortillas, fresh chopped cilantro, chopped cucumbers, and lime wedges.